

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1-3. (canceled).

4. (previously presented) A large-heat-input butt-welded joint of welded structures prepared by butt-welding high strength steel plates over 50 mm in thickness, having excellent brittle fracture resistance, characterized by:

(a) the hardness of the weld metal is not less than 70% and not more than 110% of the hardness of the base metal, and

(b) the width of the weld metal is not more than 70% of the plate thickness of the base metal.

5. (canceled).

6. (previously presented) A large-heat-input butt-welded joint of welded structures prepared by butt-welding high strength steel plates over 50 mm in thickness, having excellent brittle fracture resistance, characterized by:

(a) the hardness of the weld metal is not less than 70% and not more than 110% of the hardness of the base metal,

(b) the width of the weld metal is not more than 70% of the plate thickness of the base metal, and

(c) the width of the region affected by welding whose hardness is softened to not more than 95% of the hardness of the base metal unaffected by heat has a width not less than 5 mm.

7. (canceled).

8. (previously presented) A large-heat-input butt-welded joint of welded structures prepared by butt-welding high strength steel plates over 50 mm in thickness, having excellent brittle fracture resistance, characterized by:

(a) the hardness of the weld metal is not less than 70% and not more than 110% of the hardness of the base metal,

(b) the width of the region affected by welding whose hardness is softened to not more than 95% of the hardness of the base metal unaffected by heat has a width not less than 5 mm, and

(c) the prior austenite grain size in the heat-affected zone (HAZ) contacting the welding fusion line is not more than 200 μm .

9. (canceled).

10. (previously presented) A large-heat-input butt-welded joint of welded structures prepared by butt-welding high strength steel plates over 50 mm in thickness, having excellent brittle fracture resistance, characterized by:

(a) the hardness of the weld metal is not less than 70% and not more than 110% of the hardness of the base metal,

(b) the width of the weld metal is not more than 70% of the plate thickness of the base metal,

(c) the width of the region affected by welding whose hardness is softened to not more than 95% of the hardness of the non-heat-affected base metal has a width not less than 5 mm, and

(d) the prior austenite grain size in the heat-affected zone (HAZ) contacting the welding fusion line is not more than 200 μm .

11-12. (canceled).

13. (new) The large-heat-input butt-welded joint of claim 4, 6, 8 or 10, wherein the thickness of the high strength steel plates is 50 mm to 100 mm.

14. (new) The large-heat-input butt-welded joint of claim 13, wherein the thickness of the high strength steel plates is 70 mm to 100 mm.

15. (new) The large-heat-input butt-welded joint of claim 4, 6, 8 or 10, wherein the joint is prepared by welding with a heat input of 159 kJ/cm or more.

16. (new) The large-heat-input butt-welded joint of claim 4, 6, 8 or 10, wherein the high strength steel plate has a tensile strength of 390 MPa or higher.

17. (new) The large-heat-input butt-welded joint of claim 4, 6, 8 or 10, wherein the high strength steel plate has a tensile strength of 460 MPa or higher.

18. (new) A container ship comprising the large-heat-input butt-welded joint of claim 4, 6, 8 or 10.